DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 082 208 CS 200 692

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TITLE	Creativity in the English Program, Study Group Paper No. 3; Caveat from One Who's Been Away for a Week; Final Statement; Suggested Inservice Course for Teachers; Examples of Useful "Creative" Lessons; and Examples of Materials from Student-Centered Anthologies.
INSTITUTION	Modern Language Association of America, New York, N.Y.; National Association for the Teaching of English (England).; National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill.
PUB DATE	Sep 66
NOTE	56p.; Working papers of the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English (Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Aug. 20-Sept. 16, 1966); For related documents see CS200684-691 and CS200693-200700
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Aesthetic Education; Art Expression; Conference Reports; *Creative Activities; Creative Expression; *Creative Writing; *Creativity Research; English Curriculum; *English Instruction; English Programs; Imagination; Self Expression; Symbolism
IDENTIFIERS	*Dartmouth Seminar on the Teaching of English

ABSTRACT

This paper asserts the central function of creativity as a basis of approach to English teaching as an art. Creative writing is discussed as one attempt to discover, release, and enrich the potentialities of being and to give order and structure to the inner world of the child. In order to develop creativity in children, teachers are encouraged to: become aware of how children's inner problems are symbolized; understand literature and art, in terms of symbolic meaning; and experience creative exploration themselves. Effective response to creative writing is discussed. Appendix A lists books on creative writing and on the nature of children and their inward developments. Appendix B suggests equipment and practical points for approaching creative writing, such as class size and structure and various activities designed to elicit initial responsiveness. Commenting papers on the nature and concept of creativity, a final statement on Holbrook's paper, and a proposal for an in-service course for teachers on creativity are included. (LL)

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STUDY GROUP PAPER NO. 3

Creativity in the English Program

by

David Holbrook

Creativity cannot satisfactorily be introduced into an English program unless creativity is accepted as a basis of our approach to English teaching as an art. Effective English teaching, in that it has to do with the whole complex of language in our lives, has to do with the whole problem of the individual identity and how it develops. In this words are crucial, and so in English teaching we cannot separate words from the dynamics of personality, nor from the processes of symbolism by which human beings seek to deal with their inward life.

Because the creative processes by which we develop and sustain an identity are intuitive (so that civilisation begins anew in every child), and because adults are naturally endowed to foster these processes, it is often possible for a teacher who is convinced of its importance, young or old, simply to start creative work off, and it will "go" and yield satisfactory results at once. Give infants sand, water, and paint, and they will immediately begin to work as energetically as if they were adults being paid by piece-work rates. But even so, various difficulties will arise--on the one hand of boredom, or of blockages, of personal problems interfering with creative work, of a theme being exhausted, of judging results, and of defending the child's need for such work against those who suggest pupils should be doing something more

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"practical" or "useful." On the other hand there are problems of following up, linking creativity with literature, and developing powers of expression. So the teacher requires conscious understanding of the nature and purpose of creativity.

So, before we suggest how creativity may be introduced in practical terms, it is necessary to establish its nature and purpose clearly. And, as I have suggested in my opening paragraph, this is no less than the point of all English. What we are concerned with in English, essentially, is literacy in its deepest and widest sense--the capacity to use words to deal with inner and outer experience. In my view the former comes first: that is, it is no good trying to develop "practical" uses of language unless we foster first of all an adequate capacity to be on good terms with oneself, and to find inward order, by means which include words. This last point implies in fact that in considering creativity in school we need not stop at words--a child making a pot, coming first in a race, or painting a picutre is making a constructive achievement that will contribute to his articulateness, because it contributes to his strength of personality. So, in the widest sense, literacy depends upon creative living as a whole--and a school which inhibits spontaneity at large will be restricting the development of literacy (not least in the practical sphere), and vice versa.

What goes on between the deeper life of our being, the conflicting dynamics of the personality, and the ego that seeks to integrate these is still a matter which remains dark to us, complex and intangible, and as yet barely investigated. But what we may perhaps accept is that in child and adult, and in all civilisations, there is a primary need

to symbolise. Suzanne Langer says:

> I believe there is a primary need in man. . . . This basic need, which certainly is obvious only in man, is the need of symbolization. The symbol-making function is one of man's primary activities, like eating, looking, or moving about. It is the fundamental process of his mind, and goes on all the time. Sometimes we are aware of it, sometimes we merely find its results, and realize that certain experiences have passed through our brains and have been digested there.
>
> Philosophy in a New Key, pp. 40-41

This primary need is insufficiently catered to in the culture of our Western society and in its education. And in this deficiency there is a danger. For the symbolism referred to here is not merely the symbolism of outward communication.

What then is the function of this symbolism? This can only be answered by considering the complexity of the structure of our inner world.

Here perhaps it would be as well to try to offer a definition of "inner" or "psychic" or "subjective" reality. Since the influence (and sometimes even the existence) of this inner world is often denied, perhaps we could take a psychoanalytical statement:

> The mind or psyche has a reality of its own, separate and distinct from the reality of the outer material world. It has its own enduring and not easily alterable organization. The psyche has, one might almost say, a kind of solid substantiality of its own which we cannot alter at will, and which we have to begin by accepting and respecting. Thus, we cannot ourselves feel differently from the ways in which we discover that we do feel. We do not choose what we shall feel, we simply discover that we are feeling that way, even if we have some choice in what we do about its expression. Our feelings are instantaneous, spontaneous, and at first unconscious reactions which reveal the psychic reality of our make-up. At any given moment we are what we are, and we can become different only by slow processes of growth. All this is equally true of other people who

> cannot, just because we wish it, suddenly become different from what they are. Psychic reality, the inner constitution and organisation of each individual mind, is highly resistant to change, and goes its own way much less influenced by the outer world than we like to think.
>
> Our conscious mental operations do not convey the full force of this stubborn durability of psychic reality, since it is relatively easy to change our ideas, to alter our decisions, to vary our pursuits and interests, and so on; but we can do all that without becoming very different basically as persons. Our mental life appears to be a freely adaptable instrument of our practical purposes in the outer material world, as no doubt it should be. The closer, however, we get to matters involving the hidden pressures of emotions, the more do we recognise the apparent intractability of psychic reality. The infatuated man cannot subdue his infatuation, the person who worries cannot stop worrying, the hyper-conscientious person who works to death cannot relax, the man with an irrational hate cannot conquer his dislike, the sufferer from bad dreams cannot decide not to have them. . . .
>
> Personality Structure and Human Interaction, H. Guntrip
> Hogarth Press, pp. 218-19

Much intellectual effort is devoted to the denial of this intractable inner world, and many scientists seem to have a special impulse to deny its existence, because they cannot fit it into their scheme of things--since it does not lend itself to objective exploration. To the poet, however, it is acceptable, since it is the world of the "unknown self" with which he cooperates in his creativity.

This inward life can only be approached in terms of metaphor. For reasons which don't yet seem clear, access to our deeper areas of inward life is too painful to be endured, possibly because we fear most our very inner weaknesses, and need to defend our being against interference that we fear might destroy us.[1] We can only work on inner reality

1. See "Communicating and Not Communicating," in The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment, Editor, D. W. Winnicott (London: Hogarth Press, 1965).

by dreams, hidden meanings, symbolic displacement and metaphor: and by this symbolic work "construct something upon which to rejoice." Of course, psychoanalysts interpret symbols explicitly in the therapeutic situation (as when they tell patients what their dreams "mean") but even so, much of the patient's cure in psychotherapy may well be brought about by the integrative effect of his own creative dreaming and phantasy themselves.[2]

The creative dream is a manifestation of the integrative forces of the ego. The creative processes of symbolism go on all the time in "normal" people: and recent research in New England has even come to postulate normal night dreaming as an activity that keeps us alive as beings. The processes of the inward life are always in dynamic quest for solution, but are never solved: in order to sustain consciousness we need to make continual use of our inner resources, by poetic activity, seeking to relate our inward world to the outer world, by metaphor, by "carrying across," as in poetry, music, painting. But, of course, the external world can never be brought to accord with our subjective world: there can only be a continual struggle to build bridges between them.

Here we may turn to a most useful paper by a Kleinian psychoanalyst: "Notes on Symbol Formation," by Hannah Segal (International Journal of Psychoanalysis, Vol. 38):

> Symbols are needed not only in communication with the external world, but also in internal communication. Indeed, it could be asked what is meant when we speak of people being "well in touch with their unconscious." It is not that they have consciously primitive phantasies. . . but merely that they have some awareness of their own impulses

2. See The Springs of Creativity, Westmann.

> and feelings. However, I think that we mean more than this; we mean that they have actual communication with their unconscious phantasies. And this, like any other form of communication, can only be done with the help of symbols. So that in people who are "well in touch with themselves" there is a constant free symbol formation, whereby they can be consciously aware and in control of symbolic expression of the underlying primitive phantasies. . . .
>
> The important aspect of internal communication is in the integration of earlier desires, anxieties and phantasies with the later stages of development by symbolisation. . . .

That is, as we develop the capacity to work by symbolisation in infancy, as our first capacities for "play" and for words come to us, we have a backlog of problems of inward structure and identity to work on--and this work is done by all forms of symbolisation from dreams to high art. The maintenance of a satisfactory sense of who we are depends upon this effort. As Melanie Klein said:

> Phantasies--becoming more elaborate and referring to a wider variety of objects and situations--continue throughout development and accompany all activities; they never stop playing a great part in mental life. The influence of unconscious phantasy on art, on scientific work, and on the activities of everyday life cannot be overrated. . . .
>
> Our Adult World and Its Roots in Infancy, p. 6

In teaching English, we are concerned with words, which are symbols, the aura of each of which reaches down into the dark depths of inner reality. Apart from their objective referents, words symbolise a myriad of experiences, inner and outer. The inner experiences are those in which (according to Melanie Klein) phantasy plays a large part--as the basis of identity. We are concerned with language and literature as a symbolic record of whole experience in which the emotional life plays a great part, and to which phantasy is crucial. And so our work reaches down into those areas which are inaccessible except to the capacity to approach and engage the dynamics there by metaphor.

We are concerned with literacy over all its ranges, and we don't need much experience of teaching to know that literacy is related to problems of the inner world: for instance a child whose mother has died is so shaken at these depths that she becomes unable to use words, she is "dumb with grief."[3] And, as we know, the person with a weak identity who finds himself in prison is often found to have lost the literacy he once had: the breakdown of personality in the asocial life has brought a forfeiture of literacy. To restore his literacy is to help restore some strength of personality in him.[4]

If we concern ourselves with literacy, then we must concern ourselves with the energies of the inner world and the whole personality. And so we must concern ourselves with creativity, which is the approach to inner dynamics through symbolism, as a primary preoccupation of human beings in the preservation of identity.

Children know this--as they show whenever one establishes the impersonal conditions in which they may explore themselves by creativity.

ME

What am I?
  A boy.
Why am I?
I can never arrive
At a satisfactory
  Answer
As to why
  I am.
But there must be a reason,
For without reason,
What is the point of

3. See "Rose" in English for the Rejected.

4. I base these remarks on a study on the teaching of literacy in prison to be published in 1968 by Manchester University Press.

Me:
Being around to eat
Good food
And using up
Useful space,
So,
Why
Am I?

(Adolescent boy in an "approved" school--
i.e., a school for intelligent criminal
youth)

My first point then really is that creativity is not a minor topic--but the topic of English, without acceptance of which nothing else can adequately follow. Creativity is a natural impulse in children, and adults are naturally endowed to foster it. It is an art and must be learned as an art is--by practice. Thus the only way of introducing creativity into the curriculum is to train teachers in it, which means giving them, rather than exegesis about creativity, the experience of creative work themselves (and not only in words). This is far more important then knowing "about" creativity, or working out a schedule for creativity.

Of course anyone is capable of "having a go" at creativity: but nothing can be achieved by those who are hostile, unwilling, or frightened of creativity, or may only feel themselves obliged to work at it mechanically. Ideally people shouldn't be obliged against their inclinations to teach humane and imaginative subjects, though inevitably things are so arranged that they have to. For any significant work in creativity we must rely on the ordinary good English teacher with a love of poetry, and the creative teacher whose art comes naturally. Here, the problem is to free the timetable so that these have sufficient ample and undirected free periods to do whatever they decide to do, according to their indi-

vidual lights. This happens in hundreds of English schools, but I don't know how much this is possible in America, where syllabuses seem more formal.

For creative teachers to use these periods profitably requires a very good training in creativity: and until sufficient teachers have this, creative work cannot develop as it should, as the basis of English teaching. Of course, teachers can be trained while in service in creative work, if they can be released for substantial enough periods (such as, say, a ten weeks' course).

But any teacher who has a sensitive understanding of poetry and imaginative fiction has the grounding for an understanding of creative work with children. The fundamental problem is that of responding to symbolic expression. For instance - what does Blake's Sunflower symbolise, and how could I relate it to the symbolism in the following poem by a 'backward' pupil?

To answer this requires a recognition that, while there is all the difference in the world between art poetry and the poetry of children, the functions of symbol[illegible] which are the same because the are functions natural to man, and the[illegible] are archetypal. How we can tell what the child or the poet means depends upon our acquaintance with all kinds of creative art, and criticism which illuminates its symbolism. So, the first need of a teacher of creativity is a wide acquaintance with art of all kinds.

Teachers also need to study the nature of the growth of personality in the inner world of children, helped by those who have observed children and especially the symbolism of their play and expression. This requires more attention to psycho-analytical studies of children than the study of partial functions, as by psychometrics. Here I can only append a list of those authorities I consider relevant and sound.

Attention to these inner needs will help us to solve the problems of how a concern with imaginative expression relates to the needs of the "real" world. Implicit in our work is a concept of maturity, a wholeness and strength of inner resources, from which secure condition dealings with the outer world can be effective. The words in creative writing thus refer not only to outward objective referents, but to aspects of the subjective life which always colour our attitude to and our perception of subjective reality (as no one knows better than the scientist!). This problem in education is explored in a most relevant way by Marion Milner in On Not Being Able to Paint.

Our work is based on the assumption that by creating, or responding to creativity, while these can never solve the problem of life, there can be partial and temporary gains in which experience takes on a new

structure and wholeness, as one could demonstrate by taking, say Mahler's Ninth Symphony or Beethoven's last Piano Sonata (Op.111). Such a creative experience, when we possess it, can actually seem to bring us to the solution of a life-problem, even if we only say, "It made my problems seem unimportant" (which is a way of noting the "solving" effect of music, in soothing the nervous system, by communicating a rich sense of content and structure). I have tried to show in my books how children do work on their life-problem by poetry--as do adults. Hardy, for instance, came to terms with the death of his wife by the great creative effort of his poems Veteris Vestigea Flammae (1912-13); Dostoevsky discovered the capacity for ruth (pity) and love by writing Crime and Punishment; Lawrence's whole oeuvre is devoted to his maxim "To learn to love requires centuries of patient effort."

Children make transition between the inner and outer world easily, and intuitively use symbolism in the pursuit of inward strength and an adequate sense of reality. By adolescence "shades of the prison house begin to close," and movement between the inward and outward life becomes more difficult, because more complex. The child makes his transitions under the shelter of his dependence on trusted adults (if he is fortunate). The adolescent needs group support for his identity, as he is not yet independent. But the mature adult has a rich culture of his own, and a substantial ego to help integrate his inner self, by the active relationship between these--which is cultural activity, including all that we mean by "English."

There are of course many ways besides English of helping the inner unknown self to grow up to maturity. Experience itself teaches, and so do relationships of all kinds. We learn much by living in good human

institutions--for instance in schools and colleges where the atmosphere is humane and enrichening. Insight is gained by contemplation and from sympathetic contact with others. But the creative arts are one major source of insight into our inward problems, and of those some of the most important are poetry and imaginative fiction, because word art uses the same language in which we think, conduct relationships, and deal with practical affairs. Poetic exploration should be at the centre of English teaching, and a point at which the child's natural creative urge for symbolisation should meet that of the adult poet: the civilisation beginning anew in each child should meet the inheritance of the best in civilisation.

Having seen some of the inward problems to which poetry may contribute by helping us to work at our inner life, the next problem is how to tell what is <u>good</u> in creative work. How can a teacher be trained to tell when a child is truly engaged in such genuinely poetic activity? or how he can foster the kinds of sincerity and genuineness he knows to be in great art? Here he can only learn by studying literature itself.

The essential problem is to know how to promote the true activity of "ontological investigation"--that is, the genuine exploration of the nature of the self in the world. We can only feel sure of recognising this by our experience of what true ontological investigation in art feels like. Again, in the classroom, this is a matter of trained intuition, gained by the experience of children and of creativity, and such opportunities as seminar work, to help provide insight.

In fostering creativity the essential problem of teaching as an art is to be able to show one is able to <u>receive</u> the gifts from his explora-

tion as the child makes them. As D. W. Winnicott points out, the child always requires a "loved" person standing by to whom to "give" his constructive achievements. There is no one way to promote the poetic activity in the first place: but to prompt it a teacher needs to understand the gravity of the child's need for symbolic work on his inner life. R. D. Laing[5] quotes a patient in a psychoanalytic discussion group who broke off and said he could not go on: "At best you win an argument. At worst you lose an argument. I am arguing in order to prove my existence." The poet writes "to preserve his existence," at best: and the child creates in this spirit, at best, too--even though he may even seem outwardly off-hand or blase about his work.

The successful starting point for creativity in school will therefore tend to be a situation in which the teacher conveys to young children (by his attitude to poetry and fiction) that he is able to receive and respect significant engagements with experience, on an objective "third ground" of imaginative effort with words. I have discussed in detail how such a profound engagement with experience can help a child through a deep personal crisis in English for the Rejected, about "Rose" (p.117)--and yield beautiful writing which has much to offer others, too, as achieved art. To convey this context for true creativity is easiest with infants, whose life is all art--so easy is their transition from phantasy to reality. But it can be conveyed to adolescents, if the teacher can communicate to his pupils that he is a person they can trust. Is he an adult to whom it is safe to give? "Trust" implies here that the child can give inward revelations without these being abused--that is,

5. The Divided Self.

he will not be laughed at, or greeted with anger, or used for the teacher's own emotional ends, though this is a risk we take in promoting creativity.

How to convey that creativity is an activity in which one can be wholly involved, and that one can be trusted to be given the products of it, requires a creative training. That is, a teacher who has painted, or written or composed himself knows what kind of openness is required, and how sensitive one can be about one's own expression. But, given favourable conditions, all children can create and can at times find themselves deeply engaged with troubling inward problems. A good teaching situation is one in which there are many advantages for them because it offers an impersonal context in which to explore aspects of experience which perplex them and disturb them. The more inward agon, the more exciting poetry will be, and the greater the satisfactions they will find in entertaining others and in gaining praise from teacher and classmates. The greater the triumph over experience has been, the more satisfying will be the control and order of the language: and the greater the contribution to "practical" literacy. Here it will be seen that giving expression the greatest possible "audience" is most important; it reinforces the objectivity and helps convey that our inner problems are universal--therefore less hard to bear than if we had to bear them alone.

Here is the clue to the link between creativity and literature. From his experience of language art the child can be led to discover how other greater and finer adult minds have tackled the same inward problems as torment him and as he has tried to solve. Creative activity can thus become a gateway to the richness of civilisation which the

teacher draws from the body of English poetry, as opportunity arises, to find immediately relevant examples to nourish the inward progress of each pupil, as he strives towards insight. Of course, such work can best be done in adequate conditions, of small classes, and where teachers are not overworked.

It also suggests that certain poets and writers are more relevant than others to what children are doing in their own poetry: it implies a revision of English syllabuses (both in school and teacher training) in which certain of the more direct and simple poets--Clare, Crabbe, Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience, Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, the poems of Po Chu-I, translated by Arthur Waley, folksong--are more valuable in contributing to struggles in which the child is already engaged by symbolism while others which are more complex and remote such as Milton or the more "Miltonic" work of poets like Wordsworth, Arnold, and Tennyson, should perhaps be left for later self discovery. A similar revaluation needs to be made of prose (Twain and Lawrence rather than Poe or the belle lettrists).

Certainly it is important to cherish naivety. Too much of the poetry given to secondary school children seems to me too academic, and now there is a fashion for false modernity: the essential need for deep but sensitive symbolism must be born in mind.

But again, what poetry or fiction to choose for his own pupils in school, to prompt creative work, can only be known adequately by a teacher who has studied the nature of children and their inward problems, and who knows his English literature extremely well. For good creative work can only be spontaneous, and the teacher works best when he works with opportunities as they arise. Why children decide to take hate one

week and flowers the next as themes is unpredictable; but it is necessary to important dynamics of their exploration of life for them to do so; and the creative teacher must follow, enlarge, and deepen; not seek to dictate or control. Yet he must have an overall purpose too.

One last important point: since creativity is an uncertain and often disturbing activity, it can only be done in a school in which there is courageous and liberal minded approval of its value and worth; there are important social problems here which I can only hint at. Is our society yet capable of tolerating the open sympathy creativity demands?

Summary

1. Creativity is not simply a minor aspect of English, but its whole basis, as our literacy is bound up with our capacities to deal with our whole experience.
2. Practical capacities with language depend upon our whole "creative living," and not least on our capacities for work by symbolism on our inner life, to maintain an identity.
3. The inner life underlies all our doings, and education is an intuitive natural process by which the child makes use of the adult for his own purposes, finding order in his inward life while he learns at the same time to deal with the outer world.
4. Because of this the only way to develop creativity in English in school is to train teachers to use their natural gifts in the right way, with understanding of what they are doing.
5. Where English is concerned this means they must (1) become aware of children's inner problems and how they symbolise them, (2) know their literature well as art--in terms of its symbolic meaning, and (3) experience creative exploration themselves.
6. The essential problem is to know when children are being sincere and "real"--involved--in their writing. These things can best be learnt by responding to literature, and by the teacher experiencing creativity himself, and discussing children's work and literature with others.

7. In practical terms creativity requires a free and informal timetable in which the teacher can use longish periods of 1 to 1½ hours as he wishes. It also requires:

    1. smallish classes
    2. an informal setting in the classroom
    3. good discipline
    4. tolerant authorities
    5. special equipment, and opportunities for work to be "published."

8. Creative work reveals the natural exploring energy of children, and the themes they need to pursue for their own purposes at each particular stage. This is of incalculable value to the teacher who can then draw on relevant material from literature to enrich a child's insights from distinguished minds from the past and in the world at large. It gives a new impetus to the re-examination of English literature, for the purposes of training literacy.[1]

1. Here it is important to emphasise that "re-examination" need not mean jettisoning the past! A student who knows Catcher in the Rye but not Huckleberry Finn would have suffered the wrong kind of revolution!

Appendix A

Books on Creative Writing and on the Nature of Children and Their Inward Developments

	The Education of the Poetic Spirit	Marjorie Hourd
	Coming into Their Own	Marjorie Hourd
Q	The Keen Edge	Jack Beckett
	Let the Children Write	Margaret Langdon
	The Excitement of Writing	A. B. Clegg, Editor
	An Experiement in Education	Sybil Marshall
	Young Writers Young Readers	Boris Ford, Editor
	The Children We Teach	Susan Isaacs
	On Not Being Able to Paint	Marion Milner
	Feeling and Perception in Young Children	Len Chaloner
	The Child and the Family	D. W. Winnicott
	The Child and the Outside World	D. W. Winnicott
	The Family and Individual Development	D. W. Winnicott
	Our Adult World and Its Roots in Infancy	Melanie Klein

Studies of children's nursery rhymes and games I am sure are relevant:

Children's Games	David Holbrook
The Lullaby Book	Leslie Daiken
Games and Songs of American Children	Newell
The Lore and Language of School-children	Leslie and Peter Opie
The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book	Leslie and Peter Opie

Appendix B

Equipment and Practical Points

Creative work requires much more freedom of timetable and of room arrangement than formal work. No one can be expected to get down to creative work in under an hour. While discipline must be firmer than ever to impel the kind of attentive, silent self-exploration (such as an author exerts in his study), children need to be able to turn from one activity to another easily--from writing to painting, or to browsing in books--or even sitting vacantly staring into space. They must also be able to approach the teacher with their individual problems easily.

I'd suggest a room informally arranged with tables and chairs. Equipment: paper and painting materials, easels if possible. A tape recorder, gramophone, and "studio" equipment. Furniture that can be cleared for mime or free drama work; and rostra for this. Typewriter and duplicator. A cupboard of properties and a box of odd items of clothes for simple costume effects. Children to have looseleaf folders to hold their creative writing (illustrated if they wish).

First exercieses will be formal and taken as a class--"limbering up" exercises such as the following:

1. Writing down free associations of words.
2. Writing down responses to pieces of music, pictures, sounds. (For a list of useful music see The Secret Places.)
3. Writing a "poem like this one" or a story "like this."
4. Painting a picture from a poem.
5. Miming a poem, piece of music, or a story.

6. Devising a synopsis for a play.

7. Giving a description of a person (as for the police, etc.). Some of these exercises may be tape recorded and played to other classes.)

Beyond such exercises children should begin to want to pursue their own creative tastes. One will want to write dialogue, one "a novel," some short stories, some will ask to paint pictures, others will wish to collaborate over a play script. Such work is untidy, but a good teacher will know how to control it and will return from time to time to an exercise for all the class at once (e. g., writing a ballad) so that matters of technique may be discussed as a group. Of course, from time to time, individual pieces will also be discussed and criticised in class.

Examples to prompt creative work should, I am sure, preferably be creatively symbolic in themselves--that is, pieces of music, poems, paintings, stories, rather than real objects or accounts of real events. Actual objects, photographs, news items are less likely to prompt "involved" creativity, because they have too little unconscious content and symbolic quality. Two sources of useful initiative are (1) good children's own writing which often prompts the best kind of imitation, because of its unconscious and involved content, (2) imaginary family situations--Dad is having a row with Mum, etc. Children are intensely caught up in family life. (One perpetual success with girls who run out of inspiration is to tell them that they have found a baby wrapped up in newspaper on the step that morning--what do they do with it? I have never known this fail!)

Unless they are obviously private or painful all successful pieces

should be given an audience--as by (1) duplicating copies, (2) reading aloud to the class, (3) dramatising by a script, (4) recording and playing back on tape, (5) class or school magazines, (6) pinning newspapers on the wall, (7) exchange in sound magazines or by live performances to other classes or schools, (8) performance to the school, e.g. at morning assembly. The natural desire to thrill, entertain, and share feelings with others is important here. Work "published" should have all its spelling and punctuation corrected--and this provides many opportunities for these drills. Expression needs to be made clear: but "respectable" grammar need not be imposed where the vernacular is lively and impressive in its own right.

Marking: Except in correcting for "publication," creative work should not be marked throughout in the childs book for minor errors, nor is there much point in giving it a percentage or grade (unless school records demand it!). What the child does want to know is whether the teacher has read his piece, and if he liked it: was it a good 'love-offering'? Even if it wasn't very good as a piece of writing, the effort has been commendable and the gift must be accepted: all effort should be praised, for in creativity we all identify with our "inner contents," and to be cribbed (as by reviewers!) gives us a good deal of pain. Of course, laziness or slovenliness needs attention here as much as anywhere. Perhaps the necessary atmosphere is best conveyed by the words of a little girl of eight I head playing schools with my children:

> Sit down!
> Shut up!
> Now we'll have some free activity!

Timetable: I'd say two periods a week of 1½ hours for free writing and drama would be ideal. But 1 hour a week is surely a minimum: and this should be a disciplined hour of concentrated attention to original imaginative composition.

Procedure: Some practical points may perhaps usefully be made here:

1. No one can create all the time: periods of reading, being read to, being entertained, taking in from literature and the creative output of others are most important.
2. While children do create to order, they may flop badly at times; individuals may dry up, or fail. These failures are important, and they must be endured. (How much does any author burn or throw away!) It won't do to idealise creativity capacity: often one draws a blank!
3. Children should be asked to give their permission before their work is read out or "published."

A warning. Inevitably, creative work reveals personal weaknesses and often severe personal problems. These are the penalty of approaching our work in a humane way: great tact will often be required. But what the teacher must professionally insist upon is that (as psychoanalytical realism indicates) if problems emerge they have probably been there since infancy and were there before the English teacher arrived on the scene! Creativity has merely made it possible to see them or impossible for the school community to go on disguising or

denying them! In my experience teachers are sometimes accused of causing difficulties by promoting creative work (e.g., shoplifting, sexual misconduct etc.)! Such attitudes seems to me something of a manifestation of fear and envy of creative work, of whole living processes, and of children (on the part of some)! But there are social problems here--can society tolerate the kind of open sympathy creativity demands? I think it is important to insist that disciplined creative work can do no harm--and can only provide an opportunity for a child to try to make sense of his life (not least when at times it lies in ruins), in an objective context.

There is one possible complexity, that sometimes there may be a strong clash of personality between teacher and child at the unconscious level: but this is a risk we take in having to do with other people at all.

It is even sometimes important for a child to fight matters out with a teacher who is identifying with him, to the extent of wanting to "control" him or make him in his own image. Here for example is such a situation symbolised by a boy's prose poem, in which he reveals that he fears contact, and because the teacher is so interested in him he fears almost that he is threatened. On his side, however, there was a pressing need to find a relationship in which he could test out his fear of contact with another--and, as it turned out, whether or not the teacher could bear his hate:

> He was watching the rain out of the window; his face was lean and intense,--looking out over the grey air. And he was solely independent of the world. His only contact with life was the ships--the black, barren shapes of metal which drifted close to his tower. His long, piercing beams of light shot over the black waters.

> Then his eyes sharpened as the beam lit upon something tiny in the dark. Something shot towards the open glass and fluttered madly about his room. He shut the window on an impulse. It was a bird, a black thing with tiny, darting eyes and ugly claws.
>
> He knew he should set it free. He could not keep it in his room; it was not right. He and it were beings apart, so he should let it go.
>
> But something in its almost audacious perkiness fascinated him. It pleased him vaguely to hold this little bundle of life in his big, rough hands. His mother had told him to release wild animals when he was young.
>
> He let it fly around the room watching its wings beat blindly against the whitewashed stone of the tower. He opened the window suddenly and shut his eyes; when he opened them the bird was still in the room. He tried to send it out of his window but it was scared of the light and would not go.
>
> He stopped suddenly and was horrified--he left the room.
>
> (A boy, 13)

Such intensity is rare. Here the superb quality of the writing is evidence enough that a valuable energy of seeking inward order is going on.

Appendix C

How to Link Children's Creativity with Literature

The Ancient Mariner is a poem which explores our guilt by archetypal symbolism. It is possible for the symbolism to be archetypal because we all universally feel this kind of guilt: we have at one time made a destructive attack on life, when we have hated, in infancy, and had destructive phantacies. Just as the Mariner is paralysed by an inward death and his survival is threatened by an inward destructive badness (symbolised by the albatross), so are all children at times preoccupied with the threat of inward hate that sometimes seems likely to annihilate them. When a child flies into a rage, he feels that his own black aggressiveness is likely to tear him to pieces and destroy him from within. Against this he has to exert all his reparative constructiveness, all his powers to discover a continuing, whole identity. Creativity in all its forms is an important part of this constructiveness: so can be the reading of a poem such as The Ancient Mariner. How does creative writing link with this?

Here are some children's poems which spring from a parallel pyschic predicament. The first is actually in the mood of The Ancient Mariner (though the teacher had not in fact used this poem with this class). The evanescence here, as of the tormented identity that seems likely to dissolve at any moment ("the wind blew through him"), is of the same kind of symbolism as Coleridge's "restless gossameres"--and ressembles the whole hallucinatory quality of The

Ancient Mariner. This child would have responded to much else in Coleridge:

> We all look up to the blue sky for comfort,
> but nothing appears there, nothing comforts,
> nothing answers us, and so we die . . .
>
> Notebook, Nonsuch Edition, p. 188

the poem utters the rhythms of a felt terror, such as The Ancient Mariner records:

> Real pain can alone cure us of imaginary
> ills. We feel a thousand miseries till we
> are lucky enough to feel misery . . .
>
> Anima Poetae, Nonsuch Edition, p. 156

The Mariner had to feel his pain and Coleridge had to feel the pain to discover the spring of love and beauty: his poem is "real reparation." A child can, at a crucial moment in his psychic development, suddenly express the pain of apprehending the terrors of annihilation, experience all the pains of guilt, and emerge triumphantly purged in consequence:

Black Skeleton

1. The knife-like cloud called Black
   Skeleton came too far down one day,
   The birds soaring into Black Skeleton
   Never seemed to come back.

2. It seemed as if it would lightning and
   light all the world up.

3. And then to my surprise, I saw a
   Flicker of light come from
   Black-Skeleton
   It was like a sinking ship
   In a raging sea.

4. The wind was roaring, the cloud rumbled
   Along like the blast of a cannon.

5. The whole world shuttered that moment,
   The leaden cloud was every colour in the
   rainbow.

6. And Black Skeleton thinned white.
The wind blew through him.
And the wind tore Black Skeleton
Apart.

S. C. West

In places this poem is conventional:

The wind was roaring, the cloud rumbled
Along like the blast of a cannon. . .

but it would be a mistake, in a no-nonsense impulse, to "correct" it, and suppose that "of course" the boy meant "shattered" by "shuttered" and elsewhere gets his effects by careless chance. He utters a truth he could not explicityly ccmprehend.

The test is to try such a poem on various groups of students: discussion tends to centre on certain significant phrases and on themes whose unconscious import cannot be denied. In the end, the more striking phrases are discovered to have a quality of imagery and rhythm that could only have come frcm the deep sincerity of engagement with an inward fear:

The birds soaring into Black Skeleton
Never seemed to come back. . .
And Black Skeleton turned white.
The wind blew through hi
And the wind tore black Skeleton
Apart. . .

The disturbing effects of these lines could not be faked--they depend upon evoking terms of annihilation, of loss of identity.

"Black Skeleton" is the revengeful emanation that comes frcm the loved object who has at times been hated: he is the angry father's hate, or hate for the father, perhaps. He is destructive ("knife-like"), he is deathly and black, and he has "gone too far" ("Come dcwn too far"): his aggression has gone beyond tolerable bounds. The child is writing (in symbols) of his own inward black hate which he fears may "go too far"

and bring revenge that will annihilate him. Of course there is also accurate observation--as of the way birds disappear into cloud and "never come back": but note that the phrase is

Never seemed to come back. . . .

The capacity of Black Skeleton to destroy by incorporation is unknown: this is doubly terrible (and brings to mind a child patient quoted by a psychoanalyst who said she had "the dreadful dreads").

The fear of annihilation is bravely encompassed and worked through, until the final crisis of the thundering moment of obliteration. But at that moment, when the "shutter" of oblivion should fall, there is a vision of radiant beauty that transforms:

The leaden cloud was every colour in the rainbow. . . .

Extraordinary that such an ordinary little boy should have such vision! When made into a film sequence for a television programme of mine, the perspective of a savage landscape was followed by a rapidly dissolving panorama of cumulo-nimbus thunderheads: the effect was as of an extraordinary dissipation of menace. And this is what the child achieves: for it is now the aggressive retribution itself that is "laid" (like a ghost)--by the poem. "Thinned white" enacts by its texture and thinness of vowel sound the desired evanescence: the placing of "Tore" enacts the constructive achievement of the poet, who tears up the threat itself. The aggression which threatened dissolution is embraced, and turned back on the fear, which is itself annihilated. It is a poem of great courage, in self-discovery, in "coming to terms with aggression" and using it to hold off fears of annihilation through guilt.

Here is another prose poem by a child on the same theme. Tom was an uncooperative little boy: but by hard work at free association, and by using various stimuli, a young woman student teacher drew this remarkable piece of writing out of him.

> Fire is not understanding; he is reckless and ruthless. He bites when you touch him, he is angry. Why? Who has upset him? Why does he roar when devouring one thing and purr when devouring another. He is a giver of heat but he doesn't want you to take it. The naked tongues of flame reach high into the sky as if searching for food.
>
> He hates the wind and the rain, the wind makes him curl up and hide and the rain makes him spit in a fury of rain and smoke.
>
> What makes him so reckless? Why does he find pleasure in destroying things? Why does he gnash his teeth in anger at metallic objects? He is so powerful, he stops at nothing!
>
> What would we do without fire? He gives us our power, he cooks our food, he is our angry helper!
>
> (Tom, 13)

This piece of writing strikes one at once as "Biblical"--because the symbolism is metaphysical in the way that symbolism tends to be in (say) Ecclesiastes, and because of the antithetical rhythem. It is interesting in discussion to see how long students who deny that this passage is about "anything other than fire" can hold out against those who are able to accept its metaphorical power. In such a discussion, of course, the aim is to break down resistances, so that people may allow the poem to work upon them.

Those who deny the meaning of this prose poem are trying to resist a distorting statement about terrible aspects of the natural world. The boy sees that hate and destructiveness in human nature have their corre-

latives in the savage indifference of fire in the outer world: and about these he asks fundamental, if unanswerable, metaphysical questions.

A student who seeks to assert that the boy had simply seen a fire on the way to school and is writing about that can easily be confounded over the first phrase:

Fire is not understanding. . .

The word "understanding" implicitly evokes comparson with the human intelligence, and so the fire is immediately personified: the next word is "he." Fire is a monster which is indifferent: it has no capacity to understand by identifying and introspection. The child has sought to identify with a fire which can, as it moves, devours, and roars, seem like a living creature. But, he finds as he identifies, he finds no understanding there: the most terrible thing about fire is that it cannot identify with you, as you can identify with it. It is utterly without those capacities of understanding by which human beings are capable of compassion, sympathy, respect, kindness.

. . .He is reckless and ruthless. . .

why of all aspects of human nature does the boy pick on these, as attributes of indifferent fire? (Student teachers often find difficulty in attributing to a small boy the capacity to comprehend ruthlessness!)

Here one has to make a psychological point: that we have all known ruthlessness, and coming to terms with this is one of our major problems. The discovery of ruth is a necessary stage in capacities to live with ourselves and others (it is ruth that the Ancient Mariner discovers). This discovery is an aspect of the "depressive position," and the emergence of the rudimentary discovery of the difference

between the "me" and the "not-me." At first, when it is angry or frustrated, the baby is capable of phantasies of total ruthlessness. Because of confusion between phantasy and reality, and because of its uncertainty as to what is "itself" and what is "other than itself," these phantasies (which are directed at consuming the mother) seem to threaten annihilation. But, of course, the more the mother is "discovered" to be another, the more concern is felt for her (and fear is felt about the consequences of attacking her and of her possible retribution). It was D. W. Winnicott who called this stage in the growth of consciousness "the stage of concern," asserting that it is a positive stage, because it is the stage at which the "object" and the self are discovered as separate entities. Thus, it is the beginning of our discovering the truth of our selves in a real world. By the mother continuing to reassure the child that he is loved for his own sake she enables him to allay within himself fears of her annililation and retribution; she helps him to accept his own guilt and to discover the real world. Also, by her capacity to receive his love (really no more than his smiles and grunts, his simple bodily givings and gifts of contact) she enables him to make reparation, for the emptiness, the damage, which he feels his anger, his aggressiveness, his ruthlessness may have caused to her. Every baby lives through the agonies of the Ancient Mariner and continues to act out the reparative impulses of "concern" ever after.

So, our aggression and hate are always the subject of fear, because when they were at their most ruthless they seemed to threaten to annihilate the object of our relationship, and thus ourselves. Reparation (creative effort) is a continual attempt to resolve the threats of

hate, and to overcome them by love in order to resolve and strengthen the identity.

Children often return to this problem of whether they are good enough, and have ruth enough, to survive. To Tom Raban fire is terrifying because it is ruthless--as he was once. The fire about which he writes with such an excited rhythm is a metaphor of the hate and aggression within himself. The beautiful antithetical movement of the prose itself comes from his awareness of the "contrary states of the human soul" of love and hate: out of the conflict he discovers the necessity to embrace the fire-like part of one's nature, and "come to terms with one's own aggression." Then, aggression can become one's "angry helper," a rich source of assertiveness in the personality.

The impulse to devour in the infant, of course, is the basis of the sadism inherent in all love. So, the roar of destructive anger and the spurt of the love of destruction are indivisible aspects of our inward life. Tom sees them both in fire:

> Why does he roar when devouring one
> thing and purr when devouring another?

If the infant offers love, and it is not received, he may conclude that love--and giving--are dangerous and bad. So, giving has its own dangers: this problem Tom sees in fire too:

> He is a giver of heat, but he doesn't
> want you to take it. . .

Yet the need for contact, for the nourishment that love can bring, is always there: the tongues of fire are a symbol of the tongues of human desire, naked and hungry:

> The naked tongues of flame reach high into
> the sky as if searching for food. . .

The conflict between love and hate in the child is enacted by the dancing of fire under the rain: the rhythm of childish anger is perfectly caught by the next breathless sentence: the fire is a writhing, curling up, spitting child:

> He hates the wind and the rain, the wind
> makes him curl up and the rain makes him
> spit in a fury of rain and smoke. . .

Then, more calmly, Tom asks those questions about human nature which are more interesting than any answers will ever be: Why does he find pleasure in destroying things? "Why should I not. . .kill the thing I love?" Yet there are realities that the most consuming anger cannot obliterate: even fire can only "gnash his teeth" at "metallic objects."

But even if it were possible to extinguish all anger, it would not be desirable: having looked at the recklessness within himself, and its "objective correlative" in the fury of fire in the outward world, Tom accepts it:

> What would we do without fire? He gives
> us our power. . .

The final phrase--"angry helper"--expresses with great poetic economy the nature of a profound inward truth. The passage has all the depth of such metaphorical expression as The Book of Job ("Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?") or Ecclesiastes ("And they had that look out of the window be darkened. . ."). It is a very English piece of prose, belonging to the central tradition of popular gnomic speech: yet it was uttered by a rather sad little boy at a "progressive" school, for a student teacher.

A simpler, but related poem, was written for another student teacher, by a slightly spastic boy. To such a child, possibly, the incapacity might seem to be a consequence of his own aggressive phantasies--a retribution for having hated, ruthlessly. So, to have to suffer a permanent incapacity for having been once totally possessed by rage, seems worse than death.

I fear not death alone
But fire
Fire burns ragingly
My nerves are uncontrollable
When I think of it.

(Roy Badman, 2B1)

His "uncontrollable" limbs are filled with dismay, when he contemplates the raging fire of his own rage: the predicament is poignant. But, of course, to write such a poem, inexplicitly, is to come to terms with the dreadful fear, and so to help reassure oneself of one's survivial, despite that physical weakness which seems to be an outward and visible sign (in a paranoic sense) that one is being punished for one's own "badness."

In this Appendix I have tried to suggest by example both the kinds of connection one should make between children's writing in the classroom, and the kind of detailed discussion of children phantasy, personality problems, and poetic expression which teachers in training need to have before they embark on creative work.

Much of the material in this Appendix comes from The Exploring Word and The Stripling Pen, both to be published by Cambridge University Press in 1967.

Caveat From One Who's Been Away For A Week

Among educators "Creativity" is mostly a political word. It does not clarify but muddy. To favor Creativity is to be opposed to Programmed Learning, Science, and Linguistics, as well as to any going curricular system considered in its entirety, and to favor instead a variety of vague though ennobling educational alternatives to system, usually alternatives in the arts and humanities. Hence to the question, "What are the distinguishing characteristics of Creativity?" only a committee composed of political allies could be expected to produce a sensible answer, and that would tend to be a political answer. The best that a committee of diversity, like ours, can do is reject the word. Why didn't we? The next best thing we can do is warn against "Creativity Programs" that construe the word too narrowly.

Our Study Group defines the word "Creativity" spaciously, at a theoretical level, as the exploration through symbolism of the relationship between the subjective and objective world. Having defined it the Group then proceeds to apply the word practically but narrowly, in various appendices, to certain forms or genres of "personal writing." Hence the documents, though illuminating, are misleading if taken as documents describing the dimensions of the creative act. We must remember, as we look at the poems and stories which seem to emerge from our committee statement about Creativity, that we (collectively, as a committee) cannot agree about what a creative act is. Not only that, we must remember that any teacher who professes to develop creative activity in his students (and almost all teachers do make such claims

at one time or another) is sure to bring his own meaning for the word into play, a meaning inevitably charged with a variety of values, especially artistic or literary values, in which he has a large personal stake. For the word is simply such a word; it gathers our lives around it as we use it. As a result this teacher, no matter what his meaning for Creativity may be, will be deeply involved in selling that meaning; he will, almost surely, whether he realizes it or not, be prescriptive.

This point may seem obvious, yet if we look at the claims made for Creativity we find that it is used uniformly as a political word opposing alternative political prescriptions, and very commonly opposing prescriptiveness itself. One aim expressed at the beginning of Appendix Three, for example, is to "break the cliches that stand between the child and the full range of his experience," an anti-prescriptivist aim that most professed creativists share even though they disagree with each other radically otherwise. Yet any teacher who attempts to fulfill that aim in class will be logically bound to go against his own instructions--that is, he will be bound to prescribe a limit to the range of the child's experience by discouraging him from recording that part of his experience which is cliche (or, in psychological jargon, by failing to reinforce him when he demonstrates a passion for cliche). One doesn't need to argue the vast cliche problem--when does a cliche become a cliche for a child; why, how, and under what circumstances is its use uncreative; what is the connection between the cliche and the poetic art of imitation, etc. --to see that the opponent of cliche makes a cliche of his opposings as soon as he systematizes them.*

*Note: a cliche is a system is a machine is a stock response, etc. It may go

beyond being a cliche, however (as John Sinclair has suggested), when the possessor of the cliche, or machine, emerges also as monitor of that machine. He is then critic-controller, and also perhaps creator; but as monitor he can hardly reject his machine without being out of a job. In other words he cannot reject the cliche even idealistically and theoretically, but must live with it, aspire to understand it and control it. If we say, then, that the creative act emerges mysteriously out of accumulation and control, not out of rejection and fresh starts, we may be on the right track; but even that dichotomy is dangerous in what seems to be a process mixing inclusion and exclusion most subtly.

The prescriptiveness of a good "Creativity Programmer" (i.e., teacher of same) is probably to be rejoiced in rather than regretted, but if we are to see our subject whole we have to acknowledge at the outset that "Creativity Programs" carry prescriptions with them just as do the programs of noisy disciplinarians. Furthermore we must note that Creativity prescriptions, since they are frequently hidden or denied, are hard to reckon with and are sometimes, in the hands of poor teachers, extremely pernicious in unexpected ways. For example, in America in the lower grades an easy identification is frequently made between little nuggets of teacher-imposed prosody and creativity itself. Such identification knocks hell out of poetry for the student, and may also lead him to think that Creativity, in or out of poetry, is a stupid enough thing and a small enough thing for him to get along very well without.

If these are political considerations, so be it. They remain, at the moment, at the heart of any pedagogical consideration of Creativity and cannot be divorced from it. So caution and open-mindedness in the use of the word is essential. In the Study Group's report we frequently suggest that Creativity is a poem or story. Let us hope that we understand, and our

readers understand, that in suggesting this we are indulging in a nominalist fallacy, a fallacy that, if greatly indulged, can lead both teacher and student to imagine that Creativity only happens on Tuesday afternoons. Hopefully our appendices demonstrate a sufficient variety of forms in which literary creativity is made manifest to reduce the nominalist curse a bit; but we should recognize that their variety is not great. Or not nearly great enough. The real problem with Creativity is one that our Study Group couldn't begin to cope with in its few meetings, the problem of understanding the creative process itself and its relationship to other processes for which we also have names and little understanding, the critical process, the imitative process, and so on. Perhaps given a little time, the linguists, and others who have long been regarded as political enemies of the Creative, will be able to help the conventional Creative Writing teacher as they cannot now--help, that is, in bringing him a fuller understanding of the process, and in suggesting exercises and programs radically unlike those suggested here. At least it would be unwise for our Committee or for any group of teachers conditioned to think of Creativity in terms of the conventional courses in it that now surround us, not to be open to such help if it should come along. Lord knows we need it.

Possible Questions for Discussion

1. How do the disciplines suggested here differ from the old Progressivism which is discredited in USA?
2. How can teachers best be prepared to carry out this work?
3. Is it possible for the average teacher to do this work? What about the average or poor teacher?
4. Our suggestions and the examples we give tend to imply that creativity is poems and stories: what other activities may properly be called creative?
5. We imply that the teacher has a duty to wean children away from stereotyped attitudes to experience. What do we mean by this? What do we do about the child when to him a word or phrase which to us is a cliche, is fresh and exciting?

Final Statement

1. What are the distinguishing characteristics of creativity? David Holbrook's paper seeks to establish the nature of creativity as exploration through symbolism, of the relationship between the subjective and the objective world. Creative writing in its more poetic forms may be seen as one form of attempt to discover, release, and enrich the potentialities of being, and to give the inner world content and structure. But it is also necessary to remember that: (a) there are other forms of imaginative creativity; (b) many constructive activities, including practical and scientific activities, and a good deal of ordinary living may be called creative; (c) making sense of the outer world is also a creative activity.
2. In considering children's writing, one becomes able to recognize the distinguishing characteristics of creativity (a) through one's own experience of creativity (b) through the exercise of literary critical perception and judgment and (c) from one's knowledge of children and insights into their needs.
3. Creativity - the syllabus. For some teachers, creativity needs to be the focus of the syllabus. But in practical terms this means that of, say a six period week, perhaps two periods (one double period) might be devoted to creative writing of an imaginative kind. Two other periods might be devoted to exercise in practical writing; time, oral exercises, writing or scientific and social issues, project work, etc.
4. Where practical writing is concerned this becomes "creative" insofar as the pupil is involved in it. This requires (ideally) topics which he can see as relevant to his experience and to the modern world (see Science in

Perspective, Denys Thompson; English for the Living, O'Halley and Thompson; Reflections Dixon and others, etc.)

5. Creative writing of an imaginative kind requires highly disciplined and skilled eliciting. Each teacher will begin and follow-up his own way. But the stages of work may include:

   A. "Loosening up" activities, often of a "free association" kind (oral invention), using music, passages of prose or poetry, paintings, to elicit an initial responsiveness. "Way-out" stimuli will help to penetrate conventional responses and dull resistances to the exploration of experience.

   B. Exercises - increasing the range of content and form (e.g. mime, drama, readings of good examples from literature, visits to plays - indeed, all literature work). The teacher will take examples from literature to feed the needs which become apparent in children's writing to explore these. (See "Topics in English," Geoffrey Summerfield)

   C. The teacher will convey to the children a sense of good models by choosing authors who exemplify sincerity, vividness of insight, openness to experience, and strength of creative engagement with life. (This tends to make certain writers pre-eminent for children - e.g. Edward Thomas, Arthur Waley's Chinese Poems, Hemingway's "Nick" Stories, D.H. Lawrence, Mark Twain, John Clive, Emily Dickenson, Stephen Crane, Walt Whitman.) The sense of relevant form should arise from this work of linking literature with the child's own unity.

D. From the children's creative writing will arise problems of typography, layout, presentation, etc. leading to lessons in spelling, the arrangement of words and marks on the page, paragraphing, etc.

E. Comprehension work will arise naturally from consideration of the clarity of children's work, and from the links with literature.

Of course, not all work in literature will arise from themes developed in creative work, but will develop in its own right.

6. How does the teacher respond to creative work? The fundamental problem here is for the teacher to convince his students - and to maintain their conviction - that he is a fit person to whom to give creative effort. (Psychologically speaking, children need some trusted adult standing by to whom to give their creative efforts. This is the difference between child art and adult art: the child needs a person as "object," to hold the ring and provide an arena for the contest with experience.) Any reduction of this confidence operates against creativity: so it is very difficult to develop creativity in an oppressive or authoritarian school atmosphere. Also, any attempt on the teacher's part to become an amateur therapist would destroy the creative complex: here the rule surely is that the teacher may not interpret a child's symbols to him explicitly. If he obeys this rule, surely no harm can be done by creative exploration in a protected arena, in which expression, however anguished or alienated, brings no danger of rejection.

Important practical considerations concern what the teacher <u>does</u> with children's writing when he receives it.

It is most important here that he should convey to the children (a) that he has read and responded to their work; (b) that some (or all) of their offerings show the characteristics he had hoped to foster; (c) that the good qualities in these may also be found in related works of literature.

To reinforce this "reception," publication of children's work is valuable, such as in class magazines, wall newspapers, reading to the class, tapes, programmes, school magazines. (Children's permission should be obtained first!) Also follow-up--"See how Dickens tackles the kind of violence which Jim was trying to explore in his story?"

These responses are far more important than marking. Children's fluent writing of stories or novels should not be marked in detail. Detailed marking can be made of other work, and capacities for proper layout, correct spelling, and punctuation trained by drawing attention to good visual examples.

A sense of the range and appropriateness of rhetorical forms can be given by example. Children naturally devise their own forms of a primitive and rudimentary kind (though their use of the form is often subtle)--from this development they will easily perceive the value of this form or that in literature for the purpose in hand.

7. In practical terms what is required for creative work in a classroom which has the air of a workshop--small tables with chairs (for group work); opportunities for private work (as in a college library); source books (anthropologies, etc); tape-recorders; rostra and simple drama equipment; painting equipment; screens for display; typewriters and duplicators. Note,

too, the possibilities of cooperation with other subjects (drama and movement; art; music; crafts; etc.). The school also needs to have a tolerant liberal atmosphere in which human beings respect one another's autonomy as much as possible.

8. To be able to do creative work teachers need a very exacting training.

   A. They need to have high standards of literary response, so that they have a feeling for excellence in writing--that they can feel confident in their aims. ("I hope to get from my students the kind of clarity, insight, and sincerity I know with respect in D.H. Lawrence.")

   B. They need experience of creativity (in whatever form) so they may know what it is like for their students.

   C. They need to have discussed children's poems and other writings in close detail with other teachers, to become aware of what children can do, and to become able to see <u>what is there</u> (fascimile samples important here).

   D. They need to know enough literature to know how to match children's themes in writing from books.

   E. They need to know children well.

   F. They need to be confident enough to tolerate silence, failure, slow development, and confused or hesitant expressions.

   G. They should have high standards of expression <u>in practical matters</u>.

A Suggested Inservice Course for Teachers

Objectives: To extend the teacher's sense of the possibilities of and for creativity in the English program. To provide the teachers with a more or less sequacious program of creative activities from which they may choose in the light of their own talents and predilections. To enumerate the kinds of hardware and software that are necessary for such work, in the light of economic realities. To clarify and order the criteria which are appropriate to the evaluation of children's writing as "craft." That's about enough, I trust.

Methods: Lectures, seminars, and viewing sessions; and working sessions (optical or otherwise) in which participants do oral and written work, just to find out what it feels like!

Procedures: Contact hours: about 30

(= 15 weeks @ 2 hours)

(= 4 weeks @ 1½ hours per day)

Introductory lectures--

aim: not to talk down

to incite, inform, promote rethinking, to define the problems (for subsequent reformulation, as it arises).

to establish a level of discourse which is

(a) appropriate and congenial to intelligent laymen

(b) not esoteric or jargon-ridden

(c) not puerile (see Sparkling Words)

Seminars: these constitute the bulk of the course.

Aims and procedures:

To clarify issues raised by and responses to the introductory lecture(s).

To enable teachers to talk freely about their work.

To examine pupil's work, given as full a context of information about environment of home and school as is possible.

To elicit samples of work from participants' previous teaching, and to draw on their experience.

Recurring questions of seminars:

What are the distinctive features of creative behavior?

How does the teacher elicit this?

How does the teacher respond to it?

What about the improvement of skills?

Relationship between creative work and the rest of the English programme, especially response to literature.

Demolition of the creative vs. intellect and creative vs. discipline dichotomy, which is a false one.

The nature of pupils and of the way in which they explore their experience.

Optional sessions:

Participants to attempt some work, e.g., in response to stimuli such as pictures and photographs. This to be done in a genuinely experimental manner, of "Let's see what happens!"--not a test (!)

or a means of gaining credits. Opportunities for enjoying literature and music, and time for reflection and private reading.

Materials:

B.B.C. pamphlets "Listening and Writing"*

"Adventures in English"

"Books, Plays and Poems"

Tapes of lessons in class (to be provided by course teachers)

Tapes of B.B.C. broadcasts, especially of children's work

Related material: children's paintings, sculptures, etc.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

(a) for Tutors.

See below

(b) for Participants.

See below

Marie Peel: Criticism in Practice (Chatto)

Raymond Williams: The Long Revolution, Chapter One--"The Creative Mind " (Chatto)

Michael Baldwin (ed.) Children's Poems (R.K.P.)

*Boris Ford (ed.) Young Writers, Young Readers (Hutchinson)

*David Holbrook: English for Maturity

English for the Rejected

Realism and Sincerity in Children's Writing

*Especially the pamphlets containing Ted Hughes on "Thinking" and Michael Baldwin on making it real.

Sidney Bolt: The Right Response (Hutchinson)

D.W. Harding: Social Psychology and Individual Values (Hutchinson)

J.S. Mill (ed. Harris) On Bentham (Chatto)

F.D. Flower: Language and Education (Longmans)

M. Hourd: Education of the Poetic Spirit (Heinemann)

Coming into their Own

*Iona and Peter Opic: The Excitement of Writing (Chatto)

Sybil Marshall: An Experiment in Education (C.V.P.)

*G. Summerfield: Topics in English (Batsford)

*Edward Blishen: Roaming Boys (Thames and Hudson)

*Bel Kaufman: Up the Down Staircase

For Participants:

Those items marked in the bibliography with an asterisk could usefully be read before the school or course starts.

They should also be advised to collect samples of pupils' writing over the whole spectrum of ability and to make recordings of pupils' plays, songs, stories, etc. performed in the classroom.

AVAILABLE AT THE "SCHOOL":

A collection of books (fiction and poetry and plays) for pupils, and of recorded poetry and music for and by them (e.g. Britten's Noyes Fludde and Ted Hughes' Meet My Folks!)

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FOOTNOTE ON GRADING OR CREDIT

Credit should be given for participation in the course, but grading should be minimized in the interests of genuine disinterested participation. A possible solution is to award grade S (Satisfactory) to all participants.

Examples of Useful "Creative" Lessons

1. See Topics in English, introductory section, passim, ad lib.

2. Recording a poem. "Performance" of poetry a congenial and lively activity--attention to meaning, tone, pace, dynamics, punctuation--all are essential; collaborative activity (cf. mime and drama) in which all are involved; discussion is pervasive and purposeful; a very disciplined activity--the act generates its own discipline; d. not imposed from above. Rehearsals and dummy runs culminate in an end product which can then be shared by others.

Where appropriate, as in Eliot's "Coriolan" and Lindsay's "Daniel Jazz," words read can be supplemented by the use of live or recorded music, sometimes merely percussive (reinforcement of rhythms) and sometime instrumental. The important point is this: the children are not merely passive, are not being instructed. The teacher does not know all the answers.

3. Tape-magazine, for exchange between schools in various countries. Creation of a composite self-portrait. "Who are we, and what makes us tick?" This embraces a great diversity of modes--narrative, reflective, descriptive, documentary, etc., etc., and can be sustained over, say, half a term or more, with classroom work of $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours a week, and homework being "fed in" to the recording sessions. The tape can be accompanied by an anthology of prose articles, poems, songs, self-portraits, "images" of local society (of Spoon River Anthology), photographs (good subject for discussion), etc., etc. The class work in grouped teams, each responsible for one aspect of the work. Technocrats take care of recording, calligraphists prepare the book, and so on. All talents are exploited.

4. Games with words. (g. Auden's Making, Knowing and Judging.) Children with a pronounced live dialect should be encouraged to use it, in school. They can write, e.g., dialect stories (interesting problems of "recording" in phonetic spelling arise where words have never been admitted to the dictionary. Such a collection of stories can be duplicated, with a glossary appended, and given to new exogenous members of school staff.)

Emblematic poems--playing with typography. Write a poem about smoke that looks on the page like smoke, cf. George Herbert. (A good game for Friday afternoon.)

Rhyming slang, arjy-parjy, (see Waterhouse, There is a Happy Land), pretentious talk (see Opies' Lore and Language of Schoolchildren), hep-talk and hip-talk, and euphemisms (see Hayakawa, Language in Thought and Action); examining and extending suggestive sound-as-meaning (see Alistair Reid, Ounce, Dice, Trice, ill. Ben Shahn).

5. And so on and on and on and on.

6. Pictures.

Photographers: Shahn, Steiglitz, Capa, Magnum, The Family of Man, etc.

Painters: Van Gogh, the impressionists, Rowlandson, Toulouse Lautrec, Munch, Sutherland, Shahn, etc.

7. What does this picture say that can't be said in words? How has he (the painter) made this picture "hang together?" Who is the most important person in this picture? How do you respond to this man in the picture? Etc.?

Footnote: The Question of Progressive Sequence.

The American concern for coherent, inclusive, progressive* sequence makes most Englishmen who also teach English feel like ad hoc men. My own practice as a teacher over the past nine years has been deplorably unsystematic, but certain "broad" albeit rather fuzzy, lines emerge.

With children from 9 to 12, the modes of discourse have been primarily prose narrative, deriving its content from both fantasy and "reality," and descriptive-narrative-imagist poetry; these have been supplemented by accounts in non-fictive, non-poetic form of things perceived, e.g. a picture or a happening.

With the onset of adolescence and emotional confusion my practice has been to move in two complementary directions:

(a) to "craft-work," e.g. haiku or documentary or functional prose about experiences with a minimal emotional charge.

(b) to writing which allows for a more or less free play of emotion. So pupils might, e.g., write stories about their own complicated relationship with friends and parents, or poems of a satirical, micky-taking kind, etc. It is in the area of (a) that I have paid most attention to the refinement of skills: my response to (b) has been more pastoral than pedagogical: behind this is my assumption that the teacher is not only an instructor but also a shepherd of the sheep--not, repeat not, a goat herd.

*See, e.g., Paul Olson's "The Teaching of Literature" in Talks on the Teaching of English, Western Reserve, n.d., especially page 32, para. 2 (G.S.)

American practice:

1. Recording a poem to background music. Several members of my staff have had students select a poem (each child selects his own), find suitable background music, and tape-record the poem during a classroom session. I was impressed by the "appropriateness" of the musical selections chosen: they were close in tone and rhythm to the selections chosen. Students enjoyed this activity immensely.

2. To culminate a brief unit in poetry (reading, talking about, and enjoying a group of poems together), students were allowed to select an activity to prepare for the class--some chose to write original poems to read to the class, some chose to search out and read "new finds" to classmates, some made illustrations (paintings, drawings, dioramas, etc.) of scenes from favorite poems--many of these caught the mood of the selections quite well. One youth put together a diorama with moving parts (a revolving stage on an incline upon which a figure of a man pursuing the horizon moved endlessly toward the horizon--the diorama was run by electricity). Students acted out poems, etc. One girl decided to set a poem to original music (I don't remember if this was ever completed).

7. Used Creative Dramatics approach to help children "try on" characters from literature we were reading at the moment.

8. Had children write to mood music. Interesting results.

9. Had brighter children write satires, burlesques, etc. of poems, plays, etc. They acted these out in class.

10. Had pupils investigate techniques of propaganda and high pressure advertising--Students presented (acted out) examples in class in exaggerated form for fun and discussion. Examples from television; magazine advertisements also discussed and written about. Follow through: Student inquiry into state laws, federal control, Better Business Bureau, etc. through le t ter writing, readings in periodicals, etc.

11. See Gateway English manuals for Creatures in Verse for interesting writing experiences for students.

Other suggestions for practice:

1. The use of music to prompt imaginative response.

A list of imitable pieces is given in The Secret Places.

Examples of Materials From Student-Created Anthologies

A Happy Time

In Greece, three years ago, I was playing soccer with my little friends. We were playing in the yard in front of my house. The ball was moving swiftly, and so were my friends' feet. My friends looked like dancers.

We laughed and played. Then the sun began to sink behind the sea. It was getting late, and the score was tied. Both teams broke up, and each boy went to his house.

(Note: The teacher used the composition quoted above as one example during a reading lesson on learning to appreciate descriptions.)

Danger and Rescue

One day, my brother and I went fishing in the East River. We were catching a lot of fish, then my brother's friend came along. He worked on a tugboat. He invited us aboard. My brother's friend let the rope slip off its hook just for a joke. The joke was on him because he could not get hold of the rope again. We started to drift down the East River.

We could hear a big tugboat's whistle. We thought we were going to crash. The current was swift. Soon we could see the bridge that stretches from Queens to Manhattan.

Do you know how we were rescued? First, the rescue squad caught up to us, and then some policemen flew us back in a helicopter.

(Note: The teacher used the composition quoted above during a lesson on learning to recall events in proper sequence.)

Excerpts from Various Compositions

-- Johnny Smith was a sweet, six-year-old boy. He was not a happy boy. His mother and his father always went out on him, and they did not pay any attention to him. He would always stay home with his Aunt Clara. He loved her very much, more than he loved his mother and father. ...

-- I went to a car lot and bought myself a car. It was a beautiful automobile. I wanted everyone to see it. I drove to Paulette's house.

When I knocked at the door, she said, "Stop that noise!" Then I told her about my new car. Paulette changed her tune right away.

We drove to Patricia's house next. ...

-- When Larry was young, he was very sick. His mother took good care of him and he got better. When he was strong enough, he started school. He went to junior high school and then to senior high school.

Larry was a good student. He wanted to go to college. ...

-- Three people were flying in an airplane owned by one of them. They were on their way to a trading post out in the jungle. Suddenly, something went wrong with the engine. ...

(Note: The reader will note a great deal of interweaving of fact, fiction, aspirations, etc., in some of the compositions.)